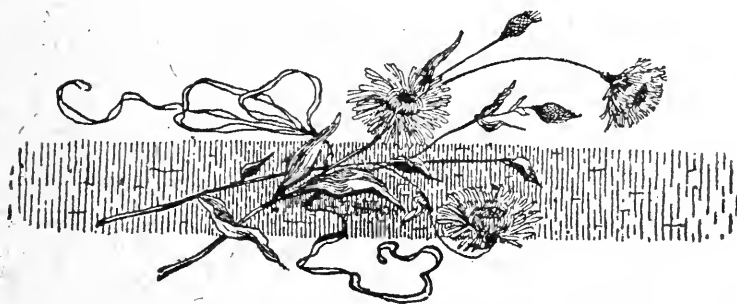


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HIDDEN NAME

BY

ALICE WILLIAMS CHAPLIN



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THE HIDDEN NAME

A Play for Girls.



By
ALICE WILLIAMS CHAPLIN



Dedicated to
Girl Scout Troup 21, of Boston, Mass.

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—Published by—

ELDRIDGE ENTERTAINMENT HOUSE,
FRANKLIN, OHIO - DENVER, COLO.

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79C368

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Mrs. Brainerd, the aunt.

Gladys Proctor }
Violet Proctor } sisters.

Shirley Proctor, a cousin.

The Girl Scout Spirit.

Tya Knot }
Lectra Sygnal }
Aida Gauge } girl scouts.
Columbia }
Betta Health }
Atheletta }

Reef }
Sheetbend }
Clove Hitch } knots.
Bewline }
Fisherman's }
Sheepshank }

Red Cross Nurses, (4, 6, 8, as desired.

Semaphora

Old Gregory, the hag.

Ann Gregory, her ward.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I. Mrs. Brainerd's sitting room.

ACT II. Interior of Old Gregory's hut.

DEC 30 1920

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no 1

The Hidden Name

ACT I.

(Mrs. Brainerd's sitting room, cozily furnished. Doors R. and L. As curtain rises, Gladys is at telephone, center table, while Violet is sitting beside table in rocker. Shirley asleep in big chair with her back to audience.)

Gladys—*(talking in telephone)* I'm awfully sorry, but what could we do, Ted? If Auntie wouldn't let us go, how could we help ourselves? * * Of course Violet and I are just as heartbroken over the affair as you two are. If we had been our own bosses, we would have gone to the dance tonight, without any hesitation. * * We certainly did have to obey. * * Aunt Hattie is our guardian and her word is law. * * No, I never thought of that. You mean tonight, now? * * It is nearly ten o'clock. * * Why, Ted, I don't know. I hardly dare. * * I am a sport. I do dare call my soul my own, only— * * I'll ask Vi. Yes, I'd be crazy to, if Auntie wouldn't get wise. * * That gives us only fifteen minutes, but we could do it if we didn't need to dress extra. * * All right. Goodbye. *(Puts down receiver; turns to Violet.)*

Violet—What's the news, Gladys? I'm dying to know.

Gladys—How's your sporting blood? It's the jolliest scheme ever invented. Listen: Ted and Bill are planning to go on a hay-ride tonight with the Jolly Club, and we are to go with them.

Violet—Oh, rats! Gladys. What's the use of talking about hay-rides when Aunt Hattie wouldn't even let us go to a simple little dance with the boys this evening. Fat chance we'll have of getting out of the house tonight. *(Yawns.)* It's bed for us, I'll say.

Gladys—I'm not so sure of that. Don't show the white feather until you hear the plan. We are going to bid Auntie goodnight, go to our bedroom, and slip out of the house unknown to anyone.

Violet --How will we ever get in again?

Gladys—The boys know where to get a ladder, which will reach to our window. We'll have the time of our lives, and no one will be the wiser.

Violet—Where will the hay-cart be?

Gladys—Bill will be waiting at the oak tree with his new runabout. He says he'll break the speed laws for once, to get us there in time. The hay-ride party leaves from Barro, in about thirty minutes. How does that appeal to you?

Violet—It's too wonderful to be true! Would you really dare?

Shirley—(coming forward to center) I'm sorry, girls. I couldn't help overhearing your plans just now.

Gladys—For goodness sakes, Shirley, where do you come from?

Violet—A fine cousin you are, to waste your time spying upon us.

Shirley—Hardly that, Violet. Having fallen asleep over my book, you surely will not blame me for waking up just in time to hear some of your plans. Of course, I don't know all that you have arranged, but common sense leads me to believe that you actually intend to leave the house tonight without Aunt Hattie's consent. Since you were not allowed to go to the dance with Bill and Ted, I presume that it is with them that you are planning to go now.

Gladys—Well, you judge correctly. What are you going to do about it? Squeal on us?

Shirley—I hope that I am too good a scout to tell tales out of school. Our club motto is to be friendly and helpful. I know that you wouldn't consider my giving away that information a friendly act.

Violet—If that is your motto, I'm delighted to hear of one good feature in this blessed girl scout business.

Shirley—(*Laughs merrily*) There are other good points, too, *Violet*. Girls, don't be foolish. You may think it's sport to creep out at night, to go whizzing through the country at fifty miles an hour, taking your life in your hands a thousand times in as many minutes; joining a group of hilarious, reckless young folks romping in a hay team; getting back in the early hours of the morning, heavy-eyed and disheveled. That may be your idea of a good time, but it isn't that of an sensible, right-minded girl.

Gladys—It gets my goat to hear you talk, *Shirley*! Really, *we* don't care what *you* consider a good time. You are rather frumpish about your good times, anyway. Don't listen to her, *Violet*. She is a Puritan, a milk-sop. She is fanatical. We are modern young Americans, aren't we, *Vi*? We'll do as we please.

Shirley—You do represent a certain type of Americans, to be sure. And so do I, of a different order. We'll not discuss that, please. Just consider Aunt Hattie's feelings when she discovers that you have gone out with two men of whom she particularly disapproves.

Gladys—But how will she find out if you don't tell?

Violet—You said you wouldn't.

Shirley—No, I'll keep my word, and won't tell. But she will find it out, I know.

Gladys—Let her, then. Come along, *Vi*. The boys won't wait forever.

(*Gladys and Violet go towards right door.*)

Shirley—Please, *Violet*—*Gladys*—

Gladys—(*pushing Violet out of door*) We have wasted enough time. Hustle ahead, *Violet*. Remember, dear saint *Shirley*, we have your word for silence. (*Exit.*)

(*Shirley, alone, looks around her in perplexity and despair.*)

Shirley—What can I do? The girls must be saved from themselves, from their own impulsive actions. But there is nothing that I can do. My hands are tied. (*Paces up and down; stops suddenly.*) Surely, as a girl scout, I can find a way, some plan to rescue them from their foolish, unwise impulses. (*A faint knock is heard.*) Can that be the boys already? (*Goes to door L; no one there. She looks out, closes door, returns to center.*) I must have been dreaming. (*Other knocks, more distinct. She goes to window, pulls up shade, looks out.*) Is anyone out there? I'm sure someone was knocking. (*Silence.*) Strange, my ears cannot be deceiving me. (*Third knock, Shirley disgusted.*) Well, enter, whoever you are. You are welcome to come in.

(*Slowly, out of center of stage, just behind table, where she has been hidden, rises the Girl Scout Spirit. She is gowned in gauzy brown. Soft music. Spirit dances lightly around room. Dance may be prolonged to suit director.*)

Shirley—Am I dreaming, or are you real?

Spirit—Both, my dear, or rather, neither. Behold the Girl Scout Spirit, at your service. (*Bows low.*)

Shirley—(*Salutes.*) This is indeed a new experience. I am glad to meet you, fair spirit. Won't you rest here awhile?

Spirit—Dear, no! I never rest. I am a spirit, ever-moving, ever-living, vital. Forgive my conceit and accept my confession. I am growing so important that I exist everywhere from the Atlantic ocean to the Pacific; from icy Greenland to balmy Florida. In every state of the Union, you will find the Girl Scout Spirit.

Shirley—Do you offer your services to all who are in trouble?

Spirit—Aye, to all. But my time is limited. You must tell me your needs at once, for I cannot linger indefinitely. Do you require my aid?

Shirley—Not for myself; for my cousins who live here with my aunt and myself. Tonight they wished to

go to a dance with two friends whom my aunt strongly opposes. Disappointed, they are now planning to slip out for a midnight ride, unknown to my kind aunt who loves them dearly, and whose heart will be broken if she learns of their deceit. Won't you please help me to keep them here, to prevent them from carrying out their ridiculous intentions?

Spirit—They could be forced, but it is not a good scout practice. Let us try to persuade them to follow the right road. Miss Shirley, don't worry. I have come prepared, with my six aides, for such a task as this. It is our motto, you know, to be prepared, and you find me so, just as I find you, "doing your duty to God, to your country; helping other people at all times, and obeying the laws of the scouts."

Shirley—You will prevent their going? Oh, I thank you.

Spirit—Nay, I am prepared to attempt a persuasion, that is all. There is a possibility of failure.

Shirley—I beg of you, don't fail this time.

Spirit—Human nature is irrational and perverse. One can be sure of absolutely nothing in dealing with the creatures of humanity. All that I can promise is to do my best. Go to bed, Shirley, my dear, and don't worry about your cousins. You are transferring your duty to an abler and more skillful hand.

Shirley—If you wish me out of the way, I'll go, though I hate to leave all care to you. Good night, Girl Scout Spirit. Your promise, limited as it is, has made me very happy. (*Salutes. Exit R.*)

(*Soft music. Spirit dance repeated in a few of the figures. Spirit slowly sinks out of sight in the place where she appeared. Lights go out. After several seconds the door R. slowly opens. Enter Gladys stealthily.*)

Gladys—(*softly*) Sshh! Don't make a sound. They have all gone to bed, I'm sure. Come along, Vi.

Violet—(*Entering as Gladys tip-toes across stage*) Are you sure Auntie won't find us out?

Gladys—I'm not sure of anything except that you are a 'fraid-cat and a scare-crow. Let go of my dress, Vi. You are holding me back.

Violet—I'm not touching you, Gladys Proctor; so there. It's you that's pushing me back into the hall. Stop at once, or I *will* go back in earnest. What are you trying to do?

Gladys—Me? Putting all the blame on me, are you? I suppose you are not hanging on to my dress for dear life. Oh, no! Wait 'til it tears; keep on and it will rip in one second. There it goes! *Violet!*

Violet—I'm not doing it. I'm no-where near you. It's something else that's pushing me. Oh!

Gladys—Shh! You'll arouse the whole family with your hysterics. Haven't you any brains? If so, use them. Wait until I get a light. Can't do anything in the dark, anyway. (*Tries to find light.*)

Violet—(*sobbing*) I'm afraid, I'm afraid. We'd better not go out. I don't like the night time, anyway. There are all sorts of strange creatures prowling around.

Gladys—(*turning on light*) There!

Both—(*See aides for the first time. The six are posed around the room, forming a semi-circle around the two girls.*) Oh! Oh!

Gladys—(*rubbing her eyes and staring*) Who in the world are you?

(*Aides salute, form line across rear of stage, march a few steps forward during introductory music to their song. Gladys and Violet get out of way, on the side.*)

GIRL SCOUT SONG

(*May be sung to the tune of "The Legend of the Bells," from the "Bells of Cornville." Each aide steps slightly forward as she sings her particular strain, stepping back when she finishes. During chorus, the manager can plan special dancing steps, or merely a taking of hands, swinging back and forth, etc.*)

1.

Tyanot—

I am Tyanot, a girl scout very handy;
Sailor, Captain, Hostler, use me every day.

Lectra—

And I'm Lectra Sygnal, messages I bandy,
To the east and west, I send them on their way.

Aida—

With a case of gauze and medicines I wander,
Using all my powers to doctor humans all,
Over aches and pains I often have to ponder.
"Help, oh, help, dear Aida Gauze," is what they
call,
Good girl scouts are what we are, one and all.

CHORUS (*All*)

Girl scout, girl scout, girl scout, ready to obey
All the laws and bylaws each and every day.
Loyal, truthful, helpful, friendly, cheerful, too,
You'll be sure the girl scout her best will do.
Good girl scout, good girl scout, good girl scout,
Girl scout, girl scout, girl scout,
Good girl scout, good girl scout, you'll be sure
her best will do.

Girl scout, girl scout, girl scout, ready to obey
All the laws and by-laws each and every day.
Courteous, kindly, thrifty, pure, obedient, too,
You'll be sure the good girl scout her best will
do. (*Repeat last four lines.*)

Atheleta—

Play a game of tennis, cricket or croquet ball,
Swim a mile, or row, or paddle your canoe;

Betta—

Eight good hours of sleep, you'll wake refreshed
at scouts' call:
Keep teeth clean, eat slow, and don't forget to
to chew.

Columbia—

S'lute the colors boldly, be a proud girl scout,
'Merican all through, just wave you flag on high.
Let your country be so proud that folks will
shout,
When they see you coming, let them loudly cry,
Let the message wing its way up to the sky.

CHORUS

(After song, the aides take former positions.)

Gladys—(fretfully) I don't know what you are doing here, and as we have a previous engagement, I'm afraid we can't wait to find out. Call some other evening. Goodbye. *(Starts across room.)*

*Columbia—*Wait! We came on purpose to see you, and to keep you here. Forget your previous engagement, for you are not going away this evening; you are not going to disgrace the glorious flag under which you live.

*Gladys—*Will you tell me how I can disgrace that flag by going out for a pleasant ride with the young folks this evening? I never heard a more ridiculous statement in all my life.

*Col.—*If you had your aunt's permission, it would be another matter. The United States wants its women to be honorable and trustworthy. You would be neither if you were to go away tonight in this fashion.

*Gladys—*Since I am willing to take a chance, I can't see what possible business it is of yours whether I go or not. Come on, Vi. We can't stay here all night.

Col.—(Blocks door with flag.) Not a step beyond this flag.

*Violet—*Our dear cousin, Shirley, is always ranting that the flag stands for freedom, liberty and justice. Do you consider that you are allowing us freedom and liberty by preventing our having a little pleasure?

*Col.—*The liberty and freedom which this stands for is a higher, nobler kind than the freedom of the hour, which you crave. Do you think a country would permit

suicide and murder just so that weak-minded people might carry out their wishes unrestrained? The right kind of liberty is yours, girls, not a selfish, degenerate freedom. See this white. This stands for purity. The white in the flag must always mean that to you—purity. The red stands for valor, and the blue for justice. It is a pretty flag, as well as a noble one. Do you remember what George Washington said about it? Years ago, when Betsey Ross made it with her own slender fingers, he remarked, "We take the star from Heaven; the red from our mother country; we separate it with white stripes, thus showing that we have separated from her. The white stripes will go down to posterity representing liberty."

Gladys—That is all very interesting. Of course, I see why you are doing so much talking. You are hoping to divert our minds, to keep us here until it is too late to keep our appointment. But you have lost out. Already you have delayed us enough. We shall leave at once.

Col.—(paying no attention to *Gladys*) The present flag has thirteen stripes. These stand for the thirteen original states which formed the union. But in the corner are 48 stars, one for each state now forming the United States. Did you ever wonder why there are five points to the stars instead of six?

Violet—I learned that in school. It is because Betsey Ross wished it to represent the Seal of Solomon, which is the sign of infinity.

Col.—That's it—infinity, lasting forever, our beautiful flag. You, two of our nation's young girls, must live purely, nobly, to be a pride to your country and her flag.

Violet—Perhaps we had better stay, *Gladys*.

Gladys—We'll do no such thing. Our promise is given, and naturally we must keep it. Don't have cold feet, Vi; good land! you haven't any more gumption than a ciam. Stay if you want. I shall go anyway. (*Turns away with a flourish.*)

The Hidden Name

Violet—Wait, Gladys. Don't leave me. I am not a clam. I'll go, of course, I'll go. (*Takes her hand.*)

Aides—(*spring around Gladys and Violet, form a circle hand in hand, sing song. May be sung to the tune of the song of Serpelette,, No. 9, in the chorus of servants, Act I, Scene II, Belles of Cornville. Repeat once.*)

Oh, we will weave a magic spell, you can never breathe or tell,

We wish you luck, we wish you well, as we weave, ding, dong, dell!

Ah———

Oh, we will weave a magic spell, you can never break and tell.

We wish you luck, we wish you well, as we weave, ding, dong, dell.

(*Gladys keeps her ears covered. At end of song she goes to two of the aides and breaks clasp.*)

Gladys—Your chain is weak. I break it easily.

Col.—We have no power but love. If there is no tenderness in your heart you must follow your own road to destruction.

Gladys—Destruction, rats! Ha, ha! As if I believed that trash. Come along, Vi. We are out for a good time, and refuse to listen to any more sermons. Make haste, my dear sister, or the pleasure will be beyond our reach.

Violet—Had we better? Oh, Gladys, had we better?

Gladys—Come, silly, don't stop and argue. I'm off! (*Pulls Violet with her off L. Aides are dejected.*)

Tyanot—Now, what shall we do? We dare not face the Spirit, after such a failure. She warned us that we must succeed.

Gauze—Surely she will not blame us. Columbia did her best.

Lectra—Shall I send her a message of our failure?

Betta—Why call it a failure? The girls' refusal was merely a stumbling block for us. Let us follow them.

Atheleta—A splendid idea. Perhaps it will still be in our power to save them.

Col.—(assuming command) Fall in. (They fall in line.) Alert. (They stand erect.) Left dress. (Form in straight line.) Left. (Face left.) Scouts pace, forward march. (Start off L. on run.)

(Soft music. Enter Mrs. Brainerd from right.)

Mrs. B.—Oh, Shirley! (Pause. Looks around.) I most certainly heard voices. Gladys? Violet? (Goes to center of stage, hesitates, takes paper out of envelope, which has been in bag she is carrying over wrist.) I can hardly believe that this is true. But it is, it is. I'm so glad for my girls.

(Enter Shirley in a bathrobe.)

Shirley—Were you calling me, Aunt Hattie?

Mrs. B.—Yes, my dear. I want you and your cousins to come here, for I have received a most interesting bit of news, and I am like a child with a new toy. I simply can't wait till morning before telling of it.

Shirley—(Pushes her gently into chair.) Make yourself comfy. I'll be back with the girls *tout de suite*. (Exit R.)

Mrs. B.—Nice, sweet girl, Shirley. Perhaps the good luck will come to her, and if so, I for one will rejoice. But I am afraid that one of the other girls will be the fortunate child. It's always the way of the world—the least deserving get the plums. Ah, my dear. (Shirley appears at door R.) Did you arouse your cousins? Will they be here soon?

Shirley—(perplexed) Auntie, dear, I've been wondering—perhaps—er—wouldn't it be better to tell me the good news first, and call the girls here, later? They retired this evening feeling very unhappy about—

Mrs. B.—Yes, my dear, I am fully aware of the fact that your cousins received my request to stay home from

the dance with discontent and even churlishness. That is why I am especially anxious to impart the good news to them as soon as possible. I don't want them to hate their Aunt Hattie.

Shirley—(putting arm around her, rubbing cheeks) They don't do that, you may be sure. Tell me the secret first, dearie, and we will go to them later. A secret always improves with the waiting.

Mrs. B.—How like your mother you are, Shirley, just as persuasive and winsome. Shirley, if only Gladys and Violet were like you, I would be very much happier.

Shirley—They are all right in their way. Only they aren't scouts. They haven't chosen high enough ideals to live up to. Some day we will convert them into bona fide girl scouts, and you won't know them.

Mrs. B.—(Sighs.) I hope that will be before I have departed this world. Such a surprising change would be a wonderful delight.

Shirley—What is your news, Auntie? I am dying of curiosity.

Mrs. B.—Do you remember your paternal grandfather, Shirley?

Shirley—Old Grandad Proctor? Yes, indeed, I remember him, though rather vaguely. I was about seven years old when he went to live in South America. But I remember his hearty laugh and his sporting, valiant spirit. He was a good scout, wasn't he, leaving his home and relatives without a whimper; starting off for a strange life in a new country and new environment at sixty years of age? I always admired Grandad Proctor.

Mrs. B.—Well, he is dead, Shirley.

Shirley—Oh, Auntie, I'm sorry. How terrible to die among strangers. Was he in need?

Mrs. B.—No, my dear, he left an immense fortune. Everything he touched these last years turned to gold. Indeed, he was a veritable King Midas.

Shirley—For his sake I am glad. At least he had money to buy every comfort, and that means a lot to a sick person.

Mrs. B.—This letter arrived today, and concerns you and your cousins so intimately that I decided not to wait until morning before giving you the news. I wished you to know about the good fortune immediately. Which reminds me (*looks around*) we ought to call the girls.

Shirley—Read the letter to me first.

Mrs. B.—(*hesitating*) Very well. I'll just read the most important bit of news. (*Opens letter and reads.*)

"Mr. Proctor has left a large fortune, naming as his sole heir one of his grandchildren who had evidently appealed to him during his last few years in the states. Unfortunately, the will itself was destroyed in a disastrous fire that wiped out a part of the business section here in town, incidentally burning many of Mr. Proctor's papers. A copy of the will is now in my hands. It is legally signed and witnessed, but when the signatures were written some careless person allowed a drop of ink to fall from the pen. As the paper was merely a copy of the original will, no notice was taken of the blot. Now we realize the unfortunate circumstance of that blot, for it fell on a most critical spot. The will reads: 'My entire estate I leave unconditionally to—' and then, there is a blot. The name that we are so anxious to decipher is directly under the blot, and we do not know which of the three young ladies, Shirley, Gladys or Violet, is the one referred to."

Shirley—What a calamity! And how will the mystery ever be solved? It is just as well that you didn't tell the girls, Aunt Hattie. It would not please either of them to realize the fortune they had almost won, but didn't, quite. I suppose that the property will go to some charity or to the state.

Mrs. B.—It will do no such thing, even if we should never find who was the real heiress, for most likely the property would be divided among the three of you. But we shall find who is the rightful heir, for I—I, Shirley, hold the key to the situation.

Shirley—(laughing) Auntie, dear, you are very mysterious and dramatic. Where is the key?

*Mrs. B.—*In my private drawer, over there. (*Nods towards rear.*)

*Shirley—*And what is the key made of?

*Mrs. B.—*Paper. It is a sealed letter, sent to me by your grandfather, accompanied by a brief note requesting me not to open the letter until after his death. He must have mentioned the letter to his lawyer, or perhaps the lawyer had advised him to send it to me. For in the communication I received today, the lawyer speaks of that epistle, saying that the name of the beneficiary is written in the letter. I need only to break the seal to learn which of the three grandchildren shall inherit the estate. There.

*Shirley—*It is too much like a fairy story to be true. It's too wonderful to think that within a few brief moments we shall learn that Violet or perhaps Gladys will be a famous heiress, with all the money to satisfy every whim and mood.

*Mrs. B.—*Or you, yourself, dear. I sincerely pray that you will be the one to benefit by that will.

*Shirley—*I? But that can't possibly be. Why, I wouldn't know what to do with so much money.

*Mrs. B.—*Don't let the spending of it worry you. Money is an article that is easily disposed of. But don't count your chickens yet. Suppose we cease dreaming of what we might do, and investigate. (*Takes key out of her bag. Goes to rear.*) I hope, Shirley, my dear, that if you are the lucky little woman, you won't think of leaving your Aunt Hattie yet awhile.

Shirley—(going to her and kissing her) I'll be with you forever, if you will let me stay.

Mrs. B.—(Sighs.) Until some big man comes along and kidnaps you.

Shirley—(Laughs.) Never!

Mrs. B.—(trying to put key in lock) I declare, my hand is trembling. I am actually nervous.

Shirley—It's excitement. Why, I'm thrilling all over. While you are getting the precious document out, I'm going to slip on a dress. It would never do to discover that I am an heiress, while gowned in my kimona. (*Exit R.*)

Mrs. B.—(*fumbling in drawer, finally in exasperation, takes out drawer and brings it forward to table, and looks through it excitedly. Shirley, at door, looks perplexed. Mrs. B. looks up in frenzy.*) Shirley Proctor, it's gone!

Shirley—The letter? You can't mean that the letter is gone! (*Goes forward.*)

Mrs. B.—I do mean it. The envelope was on top of this pile. I saw it the last time I had occasion to open the drawer and— (*stops suddenly.*)

Shirley—Well?

Mrs. B.—It has been stolen!

Shirley—But who could have taken it?

Mrs. B.—It is stolen, and what's more, I know the thief.

Shirley—Oh, Aunt Hattie!

Mrs. B.—I remember the day vividly. She was here the morning I was looking over the drawer, putting it in order, and hunting for some bills.

Shirley—She? Whom do you mean? Not one of my cousins?

Mrs. B.—No. A stranger, selling sweet grass mats. I bought one and had to leave the room for my purse. When I returned, she was sitting where I left her, but I can remember the expression on her face, even now. It comes back to me vividly; such a sneaky, treacherous look.

Shirley—But are you sure that she took the letter?

Mrs. B.—That was the last time I opened the drawer. When she was gone, the hour was late. You girls were due home, so I merely locked the drawer without doing any further work. When I had closed the drawer

upon her arrival, I distinctly remember seeing the letter on the top. Oh, I know, I swear she took it.

Shirley—Have you any idea who she is?

Mrs. B.—She called herself by a queer name. Old somebody or other—er—old Hickory—er—no—Gregory, that's it. A regular witch-like creature.

Shirley—If she did take it, Auntie, what possible use could she make of it? How could she know its value when even you didn't know it?

Mrs. B.—(*Covering eyes with hands*) Oh, Shirley, I don't know, I don't know. My head is whirling. What shall I do now?

(*Girl Scout Spirit rises from center, waving hands.*)

Spirit—(*moaning*) Shirley, Shirley, Shirley!

Shirley—(*Turns away from aunt; sees Spirit.*) You, oh, why did you let them go when I trusted you?

Mrs. B.—You can't blame me, Shirley, dear. I couldn't help her taking the letter.

Spirit—Wilful, wayward girls, deliberately seeking their own destruction. Alas! Alas!

Shirley—Tell me, has anything terrible happened? (*Clutches at her.*)

Mrs. B.—(*looking up and not seeing Spirit*) Are you going out of your head, child? Has anything happened?

Spirit—On the narrow road. Deep ravine, rate 60 miles an hour; automobile skids, turns turtle—

Shirley—Don't! Don't say it! I can't bear it.

Mrs. B.—(*going to her side*) Shirley (*feels pulse*) is the loss of the letter affecting your head? I didn't believe that you would care so much about the money. You will get some anyway.

Shirley—(*to Spirit*) I think I can stand it now. Pray go on.

Spirit—They are not dead; only badly frightened, and perhaps injured a little. My aides are taking care

of them, so you need not worry. I felt it my duty to tell you though, and I want you to know that we did our best.

Shirley—I must go to them. I shall go at once.
(*Starts for door.*)

Mrs. B.—*Shirley Proctor* (*takes her hand*) look at me. Are you crazy? What does all this raving mean?

Shirley—The Girl Scout Spirit is here, and has told me—

Mrs. B.—You poor child, you are ill. Come, sit down.

Shirley—I must go at once to my cousins. Auntie, can't you see the spirit?

Mrs. B.—You are delirious. Your temperature is rising rapidly. (*Looks around anxiously.*) Sit right down; do dear. (*Pushes her into chair.*) Just a moment, dearie, sit still. I will get you an asperin pill. (*Rushes off R.*)

Shirley—Now is our chance. I must go to the girls, and yet, we must not betray them. Lead the way, good spirit.

Spirit—And cause your aunt needless worry?

Shirley—What else can I do? I cannot stay here. I know. I have an idea. Quick, a pencil. (*Finds one under book on table; finds paper; writes.*) (*Reads.*)

"Dear Auntie: Don't worry. I'll be back soon. All is well. The loss of the letter means nothing to me. I am going away to help someone else, and I shall be back as soon as I can be. Only you must trust me as you always have done. Yours, Shirley."

There! Come along. Show me the way. I'm off
(*Pulls Spirit towards door L.*)

CURTAIN

ACT II.

(Interior of Old Gregory's hut. Doors right and left. In rear, cabinet with bottles, glasses, tray, etc. Several chairs and table. Everything barren. Old Gregory is leaning over Ann who sits in chair center front. She is combing Ann's hair as she sings.)

OLD GREGORY'S SONG.

(Tune of "Old Black Joe.")

1.

I have a plan; get rich quick while you can,
And I defy the law of any man.
If you obey, and do just as I say,
We'll both be owning limousines and silks some day.

CHORUS.

Hark to me; obey me; and rich you'll surely be,
If you will always follow your Old Gregory.

2.

Laugh truth to scorn, be glad that you were born;
Make clever plots from eve to early morn;
Seek for yourself, put others on the shelf,
Do as I tell you, dearie, and you'll earn great wealth.

CHORUS

3.

Don't scowl so black, you'll never learn the knack
Of cheating others, giving them the sack.
Clutch at the gold, be dauntless and be bold,
Trod down beneath your heels and grind the young
and old.

CHORUS

Gregory—There, my dear, another such treatment,
and you will suit the fussiest critic in existence. My
word, but you look like a changed body. Your own moth-
er, if she were alive, would not know you.

Ann—I wish you would tell me what all this fussing and prinking is leading us to, Old Gregory. I liked the natural color of my hair far better than this artificial shade. Besides the drops that you are putting in my eyes hurt me painfully.

Greg.—Tush, tush! 'Tis little you are called upon to do; just to bear a bit of pain for an hour or so, and sitting in patience while I putter over your locks. Think of the reward that will be ours some day, my fine lady.

Ann—That's just what I've been waiting to hear about all these dreary days, which you never seem willing to tell me. What is the reward? What wicked scheme have you in your head, and how are you going to use me? There's a limit to everything, even my patience, Old Gregory. What is it all about?

Greg.—That I'll not tell ye, just now, my love. 'Tis my own secret, for the present, which I have no intention of imparting to you till I am good and ready.

Ann—I hate your secrets, Old Gregory. They are never for good—only evil.

Greg.—Ha, ha. ha! You could have known them well enough if you had behaved yourself. But, being such a conscientious good-for-nothing, eager to spoil everything by crying, "Is it right, or is it wrong?" I'll keep mum about the whole affair till the time is ripe for gas-ing.

Ann—Honesty is the best policy.

Greg.—Aye, so it is, so it is—for those who have plenty of kale, but not for such as I and you.

Ann—(*Rising and pushing Greg. away*) Old Gregory, if you won't tell me why you have been working so industriously to change my appearance, you will never touch my hair again. There!

Greg.—(*Shrugs shoulders*) You are getting peevish, Ann, and it is not becoming. Sure, and what would I be telling you for? You would hurry and blab, and spoil all the sport, just as you told tales to Farmer Brown, and got

me into a peck of trouble that cost me time and worry to get out of.

Ann—Oh, how can you laugh and joke about that? You were planning to rob his orchard. I warned you against thieving. You refused to listen to me. Did you think I could stand such dishonesty in silence.

Greg.—There ye go, and all I be doing was helping myself to a sack of potatoes and a box or two of apples, which I could use to great advantage to myself and you, too.

Ann—That was theft.

Greg.—Was it, now? Sure, I call it merely helping myself to what he had a surplus of, and I had nary a morsel. What's the harm in that?

Ann—Oh, you are impossible.

Greg.—Is that so, now? (*Goes close to her, shakes finger in her face, as her mood changes from amusement to anger.*) See here, Ann, you have got to cut out all this fine lady fiddaddling, this goody, goody manner, and get down to brass tacks and common sense. What's come over ye, all of a suddint? It's "You won't take this and you won't do that," until I am nearly frantic with you. All because (*imitates*) "It doesn't belong to me, and I will not steal." Shucks!

Ann—Well, I won't, Old Gregory, I won't!

Greg.—A nice time to be yapping, when all you have eaten for the last two months is stolen truck.

Ann—I have done what?

Greg.—'Tis just as I say; for two months now, ever since we came from South America, stolen grub has constituted our menu. How do you figure we have lived, my dearie? On air?

Ann—My money? The five hundred dollars?

Greg.—Yah! Five hundred dollars! Any one would think that such a sum was fortune enough to last a lifetime. Five hundred dollars! When your mother and father died, and left you in Old Gregory's care, did you

imagine you were a millionairess with your paltry five hundred dollars?

Ann—No, but—you said it would keep us until we reached the United States, and then I could find work. Oh, Gregory, you can't mean that every cent of it has gone.

Greg.—Gone it is. We kissed it farewell long ago. Say, look here; what do you think paid the railroad and boat charges? Ann, child, why can't you be sensible? To think that I have been patting myself on the back for being a good provider and clever schemer; and here ye be with never a thank you for all my trouble and effort. Oh, la!

Ann—(*Sinks into chair, face in hands*) Thieves, dishonorable, disreputable thieves! That's all we are. Oh, it will kill me. (*Cries.*)

Greg.—(*Picks up whip; draws it across Ann's back*) Blubber, blubber away. I'll give ye something real to whine about. I'll let ye starve, too, and it won't be long before ye come to my way of thinking, you brainless idiot.

Ann—(*Springs to her feet*) Never! I'd die before I eat another crumb of your ill-gotten stuff. (*Starts off R. Groans are heard off L.*)

Greg.—Hist! (*Both listen.*) Some visitors, in search of Old Gregory's aid, me thinks. Get in there, Ann, and creep into bed. I'll not need you again till morning.

Ann—Perhaps I can be of some assistance. It sounds as though some one were hurt.

Greg.—Go in there. Do as I tell you, Ann, or I'll throttle you. (*Goes toward her with whip, which she lashes in air. Ann goes out R. Greg. waits until she is gone, then clasps her hands as if delighted with prospects ahead. Outside, cries of "Help." She goes to door L. and opens it.*)

Greg.—Come in, come right in. You poor dears. (*Helps in Gladys, whose arm seems broken, followed by Violet who groans every time she tries to walk on one leg,*

both disheveled and bloody) Whatever is the matter with the pretty ladies?

Gladys—Our automobile skidded. Oh, my arm! It is broken, I know. Oh, oh!

Violet—I'm fainting. Catch me!

(Greg seizes her, leads her to a chair; she sinks into it, near collapse, moaning all the while.)

Gladys—If you will help me now. I can't seem to see straight. And I'm suffering just as much as Vi is, only she always puts herself forward and demands the most attention.

(Greg. helps her to a chair.)

Violet—Why Gladys Proctor, I do not.

Greg.—*(looking up interested)* Proctor? *(She smiles cunningly and strokes Gladys' hair.)* Proctor? May your name be Proctor, young lady?

Gladys—Yes. Oh, my arm! Haven't you a doctor anywhere near?

Greg.—There, there. I'll find one for you soon. Don't you worry. Say, are you the little Proctor girl? I do declare; you must be the young lady I've been looking for. I knew your grandfather who lived in South America, dearie.

Gladys—I don't care a darn about my grandfather, or whether you knew him or not. I want a doctor.

Violet—*(crying)* I'm dying! My head aches something awful!

Gladys—Oh, can it, Vi. There are others suffering just as severely as you are, who don't act like regular babies.

Violet—Well, your arm may be broken, but my leg is broken, too, and my head is smashed to pulp, in the bargain.

(Greg. laughs slyly; goes to rear; gets medicine.)

Gladys—You are just as selfish as you can be. I might have known how you would act in a critical moment.

Violet—It is all your fault, anyway. You suggested the trip. If we hadn't come, we would be safe in bed, asleep. This crazy plan that you suggested—

Gladys—Violet Proctor, I did not!

Greg.—(turning sharply) What? What's this? Another Proctor? Are you a Proctor, too?

Violet—Yes, we are sisters. A nice sister she is, too. One to be real proud of.

Greg.—Two Proctors. I must look to see which one—(Purses lips. Whistles thoughtfully.) I'll fix them both. It's safest and best. Quickest, too. (To girls, coming forward.) Here, my dears, (Goes to Gladys.) drink this, my poor darling. The pain will soon be gone.

Gladys—(Takes glass, smells, makes face.) Oh, what a horrid odor! Haven't you something that I could take, that smells better? I can't drink this.

Greg.—Now, now, of course you can. Just one swallow, and the pain will take wings and fly away. Think of the hours of agony before you if you refuse to drink, while one sip of this, and presto! peace, to awaken free from all suffering. Quick, now, before I count three. One, two—

(Gladys drinks hurriedly.)

Gladys—Brrrr! The nastiest stuff I ever tasted. A glass of water, please. (Greg. shuffles off.) Anything to take the pain away, though, as you say, in spite of the taste. Why, Vi, the pain is going already. And the sun is coming out.

Violet—Sun in the middle of the night? What nonsense.

Gladys—(smiling foolishly) There are a lot of funny bugs running all around me. They are going by machinery. Bugaeroplanes! Say, Vi, I'm going to get up on one, just for a lark. and be a lark myself. That's a pun, sis, I'll have to remember to tell that to Shirley, to see if she will crack a smile over it. I'm going now, whiz, up—up—up—(falls back in chair, unconscious.)

(Violet leans forward, watching Gladys in horror; looks around to see Greg. at her elbow with another glass.)

Greg.—Drink this, my love.

Violet—I won't. I want to go home.

Greg.—Drink this!

Violet—*(Hits glass.)* I want my Aunt Hattie. I won't drink that horrid stuff. It will make me like Gladys. I'm going home. *(Tries to stand on broken leg.)* Oh, I must, I must try—

Greg.—*(Takes her by the shoulder and pushes her down.)* Sit down and listen to me, girl. You are not going away. Get that idea out of your head at once. Fate turned your faces this way, and you can just believe that I intend to hold fast to you both. I know something about the Proctors. Before you came I had a little plan—been scheming for the last three months in fact, to get ahead of you folks in a private deal. Now, with you both here, under my control, I am certain sure of success, such as I hardly dared hope for before. Until my scheme develops successfully, you shall be held prisoners.

Violet—Can't I go home, ever?

Greg.—You cannot go home until I get ready to send you. *(Gets rope, winds it around Vi and chair, until she is securely tied in.)* I'll bind you securely, my lady. Don't fret about that.

Violet—*(Leans back helpless.)* Oh, why didn't I listen to Shirley?

Greg.—So you were told not to go galivanting around the country, was ye? 'Tis a good punishment, then, a just desert, to have fallen into my eager fingers. Ha, ha!

(Violet groans and tosses.)

Greg.—Perhaps you had better tell me how it happened, to ease your mind a bit.

Violet—I can't tell you just what did happen. Everything happened so fast that my memory is in a maze. There was a sharp turn in the road, the rear wheels skid-

ded, and over we went, down, down. Gladys and I managed to crawl out from under the debris, and we were looking for the boys, when we heard the voices of people approaching. It was a rescue party, and since we did not want to have our presence advertised around town, we crept into the bushes and hid. They soon found the boys --oh, I do hope they are not dead--and we managed to pull ourselves up to the road and along it until we saw the lights of this cottage. Won't you please, please, let us go home?

Greg.—We'll discuss that point in the morning. This is no time to be traveling over the country, with the two of you dead tired and sore. I'll be leaving you now, to sleep a bit. That's what ye need, rest. (*Feels ropes.*) Ye'll not get away. To make sure of Miss Gladys, I'll tie her up a bit, too. (*Does so. When satisfied, she turns toward rear, and then to Violet again.*) Ye won't have a sip of cordial?

Violet—Oh, no!

Greg.—Very well. I guess you'll do while I drowse a few hours. 'Tis a busy day I'll have ahead of me, so I must rest while I may. A well-deserved rest indeed. (*Hums as she hobbles out.*)

Violet—(*Sobs.*) Oh, dear! Oh, dear! If I were only back in my own room! I'd never, never, run away again. Why, I'd never make fun of Shirley and her scouts, but ask her to tell me more about them. Perhaps she'd let me be one, if I tried hard enough. The scouts always seem to know what to do in an emergency. If I were a scout, I might be able to do something myself. As it is, I am perfectly helpless. (*Bugle call, assembly; door opens. Enter six scouts, singing girl scout chorus, hands on shoulders, one after the other. March around until through singing. At conclusion, they stand behind the chairs in which the girls are. Hold salute.*)

Violet—You came—to help me?

All—A girl's scout pledge: To do my duty to God and to my country; to help other people at all times; to obey the laws of the scouts; to be prepared.

Violet—Would you help me, after I had been so ungracious? You don't know all the mean things I've said about you. If you did, I know you wouldn't care to help me now.

Tyanot—You don't know everything, my dear. We have come for the sole purpose of helping you. I guess we had better get busy. There is no time like the present. My name is Tyanot. Perhaps you remember me.

Violet—(weakly) She tied lots of knots.

Tyanot—(examining them.) They are the wrong kind. These knots are of little use. They slip at the slightest pull. (Starts untying.)

Violet—Are there different kinds of knots?

Tyanot—Of course there are. A dozen or two. But the scouts make use of only a few. Let me send for the lieutenants.

(Goes to door at L. Calls. As she does Reef, Sheet-bend, Clove Hitch, Bowline, Fisherman's Sheepshank run in, dressed in brown; legs, arms, etc, bound with narrow strips of brown cloth. Littlest girls preferred. They bow. Tyanot motions them to help untie the knots on both the girls.)

Reef—(stepping forward.) A reef knot is one that is used in tying reef points. When a sailor wishes to take in a sail, to adapt the sail to the force of the wind, there are ropes or points along the sail which he ties down. The knot he uses must be a sure one, and firm. It must not slip, so he uses the reef knot. To join two ropes in such fashion as to render it non-slippable and yet easily untied when wanted. This is a reef knot, or, as it is sometimes called, the square knot; the only knot used in first aid work. It is made thus: (Demonstrates. Returns to rear with bow.)

Bowline—(advancing) A bowline loop is one that will not slip after the first grip. It is often used as a halter for horses. It is made thus: (Demonstrates and returns to rear.)

Sheetbend—(*advancing*) Here is a rope an inch thick and here is one hardly half an inch in diameter. We want to connect the two ropes of different sizes. To do so, a sheetbend knot is used, thus: (*Demonstrates; returns to rear.*)

Clove-hitch—Which is the knot most popular with the pioneers? What knot do they use when fastening ropes to poles? The one knot that be satisfactorily used, the clove-hitch, which, when pulled tight, will not slip either up or down. The clove-hitch is a temporary fastening, quickly made, speedily unmade. Here is a sample of its use. (*Demonstrates; returns to rear.*)

Sheepshank—Never cut a rope unless it is absolutely necessary. If you need or wish to shorten the line, the guy rope of your tent, an anchor rope or clothesline, use the sheepshank knot, not the knife. It is made in this manner. (*Demonstrates, returns to rear.*)

Fisherman's—(*advancing*) The fisherman's knot is used by the fishermen when they make up their nets in which they catch fish. The nets are large and contain thousands of the knots, which are made thus. (*Demonstrates.*)

All Knots—(*advancing*) Six of us, known to all good scouts! Au revoir. (*Bow, put hands on shoulder of knot in front, in line, run lightly off L.*)

Tyanot—There you are, girls, you are free. (*Throws last piece of rope off.*) How does it feel, Violet?

Violet—Thank you, ever so much. You are so good to me. (*Tries to rise; sinks back in chair with groan.*) My leg! Oh! I had forgotten all about it in my terror of being bound up by that old hag. Oh!

Tyanot—My work is accomplished, my dear. You shall now be put in the care of Aida Gauze and the Red Cross Scouts. I can no longer assist you. (*Salutes, and goes back.*)

Aida—(*advancing and putting her arm around Violet*) Don't worry, dearie. You will soon be well.

Violet—I have been very selfish, Miss Aida Gauze, but I'm going to try not to be any longer. I'll start right off now. Will you please leave me, and go to Gladys? She is in more urgent need of you than I am, so I'd rather wait till after you have examined her. I guess I shall be able to stand the pain for a while.

Aida—That is the way a girl scout would talk. Bravo! Now, I'll tell you a secret. I can attend to you both at once so there need be no painful waiting. My assistants are most anxious to help. I'll just take a peek at Gladys. (*Smells of her mouth. Looks around; sees glass Greg has used, smells of it. Shakes head.*) Poison! The antidote for that particular poison is raw eggs or mustard water. (*Turns.*) Betta Health, will you pillage Old Gregory's pantry for eggs? In the meantime, (*feels Gladys' arm*) a broken arm, er—um—splint, bandages, hot water, linament, antiseptics. (*Goes to Violet, feels of her leg.*) More splints, bandages, soft cloths. Do you hear me, aides?

R. C. Nurses—(*off in distance*) We hear. We obey.

Aida—(*Putting hand on Violet's head*) Close your eyes, my dear, while my able assistants use their nimble fingers and their first-aid knowledge. They are fast approaching, prepared to work.

Violet—I do not hear them.

Aida—They work silently but well. Suppose I ask them to sing while they labor.

(*Soft music. Enter Red Cross Girls, clad in nurses' costumes, one carrying basin, to wash Gladys' head, another with bandages, one to put splint on Gladys, one for Violet, one gets antidote ready for Gladys, etc. Each one has a special task. While they work, one girl sings, the rest joining in the chorus. Any song may be used, preferably about nursing. Would suggest something in the line of "She Wears a Cross Upon Her Sleeve." Betta and Aida go from one girl to another, helping, advising by motions. At end of song, bandages all on, Gladys sitting up, Aida and Betta salute, the Red Cross Girls have tiptoed out.*)

Gladys—(*dazed*) Oh, dear, oh, dear! What a horrible dream I have had; a terrible nightmare. (*Opens eyes wide in wonder.*) Violet, where in the world are we?

Violet—Don't be disturbed, dear, and don't you worry the least little bit. We are all right. (*Puts out a comforting hand to Gladys.*)

Gladys—It wasn't a dream. Every one of the horrors are real. We are prisoners and you sit there calmly telling me that all is right. Haven't you sense enough to realize that we are helpless?

Violet—(*calmly*) We would truly be helpless if it were not for the Girl Scouts. As the matter stands now, we are deeply in their debt, for they have mended our broken limbs and set us free.

Gladys—(*scornfully*) Oh, the girl scouts!

Violet—Please, Gladys, dear, don't talk that way. We have been very foolish, and I, for one, have learned a lesson through fright and pain that I am not likely ever to forget. What Shirley has always said is true, that a girl scout is the best friend a girl can have because she takes an oath to help people at all times, which these (*points*) brave friends have certainly done.

Gladys—(*seeing aides for the first time*) Oh, I beg your pardon. I didn't know that you were here. If you are so all-powerful, why don't you take us home where we surely ought to be this very minute?

Columbia—We are not all-powerful by any means. We are only human, you must remember that. It is not in our power to make your arm or leg better in a moment. The limbs are set in a proper manner, but nature will have to take her time in healing them. As for conveying you home, that is the problem now before us. You were not in a condition to be moved until just now. The girl scout Spirit's orders were to take care of you and wait for her arrival.

Gladys—I hope we won't have to wait forever.

Col.—(*smiling kindly*) Hardly that.

Violet—How will she know where we are? Or does she know already?

Col.—No, she does not know. We must signal her. *Lectra* Signal, we must look to you to find some satisfactory way of signaling the Spirit.

Lectra—That's a very simple task, Columbia. We have so many methods of signaling that our first move must be to decide which code to use. The simplest for us now, I think, is perhaps our whistle call of alarm. (*Goes to left, blows whistle alternately long and short.*) If the Spirit hears this, she will know that we are in need of her. (*Repeats whistle; door slams on right.*)

Col.—Old Gregory is coming. (*Rapid movement. Gladys and Violet sink back in chairs, the aides throw the ropes over them as if they were tied as before, they run to right back, and crouch behind the door as Old Gregory opens it. Violet and Gladys act as if unconscious, and groan occasionally.*)

Greg.—(*Stands at door; looks around with scowl.*) What noise is this I hear? Eh? (*Looks. Everything silent. Still groaning, he ye? (Cackles.)*) I reckon Old Gregory fixed ye safe, and 'twas yer moans and her dreams that alarmed her. Sleep on, fair damsels, tomorrow there will be worse coming to you, for ye will no longer be Proctors until my pretty Anne is put in yer place and gets the money that should rightfully be coming to ye. When we have gone far away with the money, ye can go free, and not till then. Ha, ha, ha! (*Shakes fist; shuffles off. Silence a moment.*)

Gladys—(*Puts up her head.*) Did you hear that? Money coming to us? Ann? Worse coming? What does she mean?

Violet—I don't care. She doesn't mean anything good, that's sure. Please, dear scouts, won't you help us to escape? Just help us to get home, that's all I'll ever ask for.

Lectra—I'll try another signal; this time a silent one. (*Goes to center of stage, hands in cup-shape form to her lips. She calls softly.*) Semaphora, Semaphora!

(Sema. runs in from L.)

Sema.--*(saluting)* Here, Lectra Signal.

Lectra.--We wish to send an emergency call to the Spirit. Will you arrange it for me?

Sema.--The sun has not yet risen. 'Twill be difficult to make anyone see our signals in the darkness of night. *(Thinks.)* Wait. I have an idea. *(Gets candle and candlestick off. mantel or table in rear.)* Lectra, I shall need you to hold this lighted candle *(Lights it.)* this side of the window shade, and I will step between the light and the shade. See, my shadow is cast upon the shade. How is that? A lamp or bulb would give a clearer shadow, but we must be satisfied with what we have.

Violet---It's like a game of silhouettes.

Sema.--*We are on a hill, and the window is exposed to the road. If any one is passing in this vicinity, she will surely see our actions. This is H—now E—now L—and P. I'll repeat this call for help several times. (Does so, spelling out letters during motions. Semaphora signals may be obtained from almost any Boy or Girl Scout book. Silence for a while, as they wait for an answer; which does not come.)*

Gladys—Supposing your Girl Scout Spirit doesn't happen to be passing this way? Suppose she hasn't been able to locate the cottage. Please find some other way to attract the attention of outsiders.

Sema.--Certainly. I shall use my mirror, if you wish. Inaction is unbearable as such a time as this, I know. This method of signaling is much simpler when the sun is shining or there is a strong light. The candle, however, is better than nothing. I must arrange the candle so that the light will fall on the mirror which will cast off a ray toward the top of that tree out there beyond the window. *(She arranges so that the candle's light is refracted in the mirror and cast through the window. This she flashes back and forth according to the code.)*

· · · · · · · · - - ·
H E L P

(Sends this several times.) We use the Morse code for our

mirror messages. (*Repeats.*) There's H, and E, L and P. See how the light from the mirror is striking yonder tree? An ordinary traveler might not notice the dancing lights on the tree top, but the Scout Spirit is ever on the lookout for Scout Signals, and will be sure to see, if she is anywhere in the vicinity. (*Repeats. When half through, she halts.*) Hark! I believe our call is answered. (*Repeats hastily.*)

(*Enter Spirit with Shirley. Shirley throws her arms around the two girls, while the Spirit silently praises her aides.*)

Shirley—Heaven be praised! We have found you at last.

Gladys—We don't deserve to be, we are such crazy, silly freaks who have no right to expect your sympathy in the least.

Violet—I am so sorry.

Shirley—We will forget and forgive all around. The first necessity is to hurry you girls home to a warm bed and a few luxuries. You poor dears! Come, let's hurry. Auntie will be worrying her heart out by this time.

Gladys—Wait a moment, Shirley. Before we leave this place, you ought to be told about the old woman who took us prisoners, and who has threatened us.

Violet—Oh, Glad, let's get out without saying another word. She might come in again, and I for one never want to see that ugly creature's face any more.

Gladys—Nevertheless, I think Shirley ought to be told about this Anna something or other who is going to get the money that should rightfully come to us. It is all Greek to me, but there must be some meaning in what that old hag said.

Shirley—(*gripping Gladys' arm*) Tell me, Gladys, tell me all you know. What is the woman's name?

Gladys—Old Gregory.

Shirley—Old Gregory! Then Aunt Hattie is right in her deductions. Girls, I must speak to Old Gregory at once.

Violet—Oh, don't, Shirley! She is something awful, believe me! It isn't safe to take any chances meeting her.

Gladys—You had better be careful. She's a regular witch.

Aides—(*in line, salute*) We are here.

Shirley—Thanks, my friends. I know that you will stand by me. Please wait while I look around a little. (*Exit R.*)

Gladys—(*restlessly paces*) I do hope that no harm will come to her.

Spirit—There is no need to worry.

Gladys—I hope not, for I have just found out that Shirley is far more human than I had ever imagined her.

Violet—She is lovely, that's what she is. We have been perfect ninnies, acting as we have.

Gladys—I wish she would come back.

Spirit—She is coming.

(*Shirley enters with Ann, who is dazed and looks around in awe. Shirley keeps her hand on Ann's.*)

Ann—Why, you are a girl scout! Now, I am sure that my silent plea to be rescued is answered.

Shirley—Who are you, my dear?

Ann—My name is Ann Hunter, and I lived in South America until my parents died, and old Gregory took the money they left for me, and insisted upon my accompanying her here to the United States.

Shirley—Where is Old Gregory now?

Ann—In her room, next to the one I was in.

Shirley—(*to scouts*) See that she does not escape. We shall have need of her later on. Now continue your story. (*Aides slip off R.*)

Ann—She never explained her plans to me, but I know they were dishonest through and through. She was nurse to an old man who died bequeathing a large fortune to his niece. Old Gregory found out all about the will,

and came here to America, intending to substitute me for the rightful heiress. That, I believe, is the reason why she dyed my hair and tried in many ways to alter my appearance.

(Enter Aida.)

Aida—Old Gregory has disappeared.

Shirley—Gone! Oh, dear me! We must find her. She has the letter which we absolutely must find.

Ann—Perhaps I can help. I know of a place in the woods where she often hides, after her pillaging trips. It is very difficult to find the cave unguided. Perhaps I had better go with you, to direct the way. *(Exit with Aida, off L. Aides follow.)*

Gladys—What is all this mystery about? Are we really going to be rich?

Shirley—One of us girls is. The question is which one. It cannot be answered until we find the letter written by Grandad Proctor, in which he states the name of the grandchild who will inherit his fortune. At present, our fate is in the hands of Old Gregory, in whose possession is the precious letter.

(Noise outside. Enter aides, Ann and Old Gregory, who is a prisoner.)

Greg.—*(Defiantly)* Well, ye'll not get a word out of me. I'm mum. Ye can't make me talk, you fresh young imps.

Ann—*(shaking her)* Where is the letter belonging to the Proctors, Old Gregory?

Greg.—*(Laughs scornfully)* Ha, ha! Don't ye know me better than to ask me that, Ann? I wouldn't tell ye, if ye were to torture me to the death.

Shirley—Perhaps you would consider selling the letter to us. We would pay you well. Will you let me buy it?

Greg.—Not you, I should say not. Ye white-livered saint! Be gone from me with your ridiculous offers. My lips are sealed.

Gladys—You old witch, you shall be forced to tell.

Greg.—He, he, he! And who will do the making?

Gladys—Shirley, she bound us to these chairs and tortured us with poisons and threats. Why shouldn't we do the same to her, especially as she richly deserves all the punishment we can inflict? Let's keep her tied up until she tells where she has hidden the letter.

Greg.—Go ahead. Go ahead, little folks. Ye can't frighten me any.

Shirley—Very well. Come, good scouts, to our assistance.

(They bind Old Greg. to the chair, who chuckles all the while as if enjoying herself. When task is completed the aides are with Spirit in rear.)

Shirley—The next task on the program is to send for Aunt Hattie. She really ought to be here, under the circumstances. And Ann, you are exhausted. I shall take you back home with me, while Gladys and Violet shall mount guard here. Take good care of her, girls. Don't let her escape, on your life.

Violet—You won't be long?

Shirley—No longer than fifteen minutes, if all goes well.

Exit left, all but Old Greg., Violet and Gladys.)

(Gregory chuckles, sings, chuckles again, seems to be enjoying herself. Violet sits in another chair, tired out. Gladys paces up and down.)

Gladys—*(impatiently)* Oh, for goodness sakes, keep quiet! *(Greg. makes face at her.)* Any one would think that you considered this the best of good jokes.

Greg.—It is, my dear, it is. *(Laughs hilariously.)*

Gladys—On you, I guess.

Greg.—Oh, no, my dear, on you.

Gladys—Say, Vi, I can't stand her a moment longer. If you don't mind, I'll go look up the road for the folks.

Violet—Don't leave me for long. I'm afraid of her.

Greg.—Hear! Hear! *(Laughs.)*

Gladys—I won't be out of hearing at any time. Call me if you need me. (*Exit L. Greg. still chuckles. Violet looks despairingly at her and gives long sigh.*)

Greg.—(*Screws face in wink.*) Sh! Hey, you!

Violet—What do you want?

Greg.—Do you like pretty dresses, eh, little girl?

Violet—Of course I like pretty dresses. All girls do.

Greg.—I thought so. And lovely jewelry, eh?

Violet—Who doesn't? I guess we all do.

Greg.—And an automobile all to yourself, and a grand house with servants in plenty, and lots of beaux—

Violet—What are you driving at?

Greg.—Money will buy all those things—and more, many more.

Violet—Every one knows that. You don't need to tell me. I have no money.

Greg.—You could have.

Violet—Yes, perhaps, if the letter is found—

Greg.—And perhaps, more likely, if the letter is not found, but is destroyed.

Violet—What do you mean?

Greg.—Suppose the fortune of \$200,000 is left to Miss Shirley. What good would the finding of the letter do you?

Violet—It will be very nice for Shirley.

Greg.—But not for you, eh? Suppose the letter is never found. The money will be divided into three equal parts, and you will receive your share of \$70,000. That ain't to be sniffed at, let me tell you, my young lady. What do you think?

Violet—Oh, no. Even that would be a fortune to any of us girls.

Greg.—Do you get the idea?

Violet—Perhaps I am thick, but I still don't understand what your suggestions are leading to.

Greg.—To this. I have the letter. I will hand the letter over to you, provided you burn it. Also that you pay me \$10,000 the day you receive your share of the \$200,000. Isn't that fair? I plan a way for you to get \$70,000, out of which sum you give me one-seventh. Without me, you would get nothing.

(Violet stares straight ahead in silence.)

Greg.—Well, what do you say? Seems to me it takes you a purty long time to decide whether you want that fortune or not.

Violet—*(dreamily)* \$60,000 for me, and I am to give you the other \$10,000 if I burn the letter.

Greg.—Yes? Yes? Well?

Violet—*(rising suddenly)* This is my answer—that you are a wicked woman to try to tempt me into sin. Just when I have promised to be honest and trustworthy, too. You can keep the letter, you old witch. I'd rather do without the money and be a pauper, than a thief. *(Limps off left stage.)*

Greg.—*(disgusted)* Shucks! Piffle! I'm disappointed with that girl. I thought that she would surely have grit enough to accept my plan. No gumption, no daring! Ding bust!!! *(Tries to pull herself free)* Whoever tied these knots tied them well. Ouch! I can't make them budge a sixteenth of an inch. *(Wiggles around.)* Oh, my hands! All the skin is like to be scraped off by the time I get freed. *(Groans.)* Shucks! Shucks! What a mess I've made of the whole affair. When everything seemed to be going along in my favor, too.

(Enter Gladys; smiles at her from door.)

Gladys—You can't get away, Old Gregory, so cease trying. How do you like being our prisoner?

Greg.—None of your business. What's that to you?

Gladys—A great deal; more than you realize. Listen. *(Approaches her with caution; looks around to see that no one overhears.)* Violet has just told me about the suggestion that you made to her—

Greg.—Well?

Gladys—Violet is a fool.

Greg.—(*Sits erect, eyes brightening*) Them's my sentiments exactly. Are ye such another?

Gladys—Oh, no, indeed. Your scheme sounded mighty good and clever to me. A plan worth trying. I'd like sixty thousand dollars mighty well.

Greg.—(*Chuckles*) At last I've found a creature after my own heart. You agree to give me \$10,000 out of your own share?

Gladys—Oh, yes, when I get it. But how will you be sure that I will keep my word?

Greg.—I'm not afraid, for if you go back on me, I'll squeal how you took the letter and destroyed it before my very eyes. Then, I'll tell them who is the rightful heir-ess, and you'll get nothing at all for your trouble. No, indeed, I ain't worrying that you won't pass over the cash. I've brains enough for that. He, he!

Gladys.—Then, if everything is satisfactory to you, and I agree, where is the letter?

Greg.—Ye'll do as I say, now? Burn the letter in front of me here, and when ye get the dough, \$10,000 belongs to me.

Gladys—(*impatiently*) Yes, yes, I said so, if your plans work as you hope.

Greg.—They'll work. Listen, now. Walk to the center of rear wall. (*She follows the directions Greg gives.*) Face front. Take four short steps forward. Kneel and tap on floor until you hear a hollow sound.

Gladys—(*Taps.*) I have it. What next? Shall I pull up the plank, and how?

Greg.—There is a chisel over in the box, in the corner.

(*Gladys gets it and returns to place on floor.*)

Greg.—Now pry up the board.

Gladys—(*Does so.*) This is easy. Ah! Here is a letter in a box. (*Holds it up.*) This the one?

Greg.—That's the one. Come, make haste. (*Gladys takes her time about closing hole, returns chisel, finally coming forward with letter.*)

Gladys—(*Has match in her hand*) I'll burn it at once.

Greg.—Aye, the sooner the better for me.

(*Gladys lights letter and goes to rear.*)

Greg.—Let me see it burn, girl. I won't stand for any deceit.

(*Gladys turns around. She has placed letter on tray. They watch in silence while letter burns.*)

Greg.—(*after it is burned*) Well, that's off my mind. You are a nice girl. Now, don't forget—

(*Enter Violet slowly, limping.*)

Violet—They are coming—Aunt Hattie, Shirley and all the scouts.

(*Voices outside.*)

Greg.—(*to Gladys*) Not a word, remember. This little secret is yours and mine. don't ye forget. Mum's the word.

(*All enter. Mrs. B. and Shirley come forward, the scouts with the Spirit remaining in the rear.*)

Shirley—(*pointing to Greg.*) Is this the woman, Aunt Hattie, who stole the letter that was sent by Granddad Proctor to you?

Mrs. B.—(*looking at Greg.*) The very one! Oh, you wretched thief, what have you done with the letter which you took from my private drawer?

Greg.—I stole your letter, ma'am?

Mrs. B.—Yes. Don't try to hedge and evade. I know positively that you took it, the day you came to sell grass mats. Where is it? Tell me at once.

Greg.—(*defiantly*) If I did take it, it is where you will never find it, be sure of that.

Mrs. B.—Explain yourself.

Greg.—Certainly, certainly. I have destroyed the document that you are so interested in. It is burnt to ashes.

(Gasp from the group.)

Mrs. B.—Oh, dear me! What shall I do now? I have failed in my trust, and will never forgive myself. *(She weeps.)* Failed, failed!

Gladys—*(going to Mrs. B., and putting her arm around her neck.)* Don't cry, Auntie. And don't believe one word this old woman says. The letter is not destroyed. Here it is. *(Takes a letter from her bosom.)*

Greg.—What!

All—Oh!

Mrs. B.—Oh, Gladys!

Gladys—She begged me to destroy it, stating that if I did, Shirley, who is the rightful heiress, would not receive all that belonged to her, but that the fortune would be divided among the three of us. She first made the suggestion to Violet, who told me about it. We planned this trick on her, to feign acquiescence, to burn a faked letter, and keep the real one for you.

Mrs. B.—My dear girl! *(Takes letter.)*

Gladys—I was only doing what was right. We wanted to show Shirley what good scouts we could be

Mrs. B.—*(Turns away to read letter.)*

Shirley—You certainly have done so, Gladys. I shall never be able to thank you enough for your generous act. But, listen, dear, you and Violet shall lose nothing by your honesty. I had already planned that if, by any chance, I was named the beneficiary, you would all share my good fortune with me. You, Violet, Aunt Hattie, and I, all to have equal parts.

Violet—You would really be willing to give three-fourths of your fortune away?

Shirley—\$50,000, will be sufficient to supply all my needs, thank you. Besides, there is no reason why I should be given the whole amount anyway. You both are

as near relatives of Granddad Proctor as I am.

Gladys—Thank you, thank you, Shirley, I can't tell you—

Mrs. B.—(looking up from letter) Gladys, did you say that Shirley was to inherit the money?

Gladys—Yes, Aunt Hattie.

Mrs. B.—Who told you so?

Gladys—Old Gregory. Why, why, you can't mean that—that it isn't true—that she isn't—

Mrs. B.—I mean just that. The name mentioned in the letter is not Shirley's, but—your own.

Gladys—I? I to inherit the \$200,000?

Violet—Dear me!

Shirley—For your sake, I am very glad, dear.

Mrs. B.—What a mix-up. You see, by your own loyalty to your cousin, you win the entire estate for yourself.

Gladys—(dazed) \$200,000, all mine!

Mrs. B.—Yes, Gladys. You are a rich woman, now. I do hope you will spend your money carefully, and save it guardedly. \$200,000 is quite a sum, and yet it is so easy to lose that much by imprudent handling.

Gladys—Why, Aunt Hattie—Shirley—you don't believe that I would keep the whole fortune for myself, do you? I can be just as good a scout as Shirley. If she intended to divide, so shall I. (*Seizes letter and tears it to pieces.*) There goes my claim! We are all due for a windfall of \$50,000 each.

(*Shirley seizes one hand, Violet the other. Aunt in rear, puts her face close to Gladys'. Girl Scouts form circle around them, and sing chorus as the curtain falls.*)

CURTAIN.

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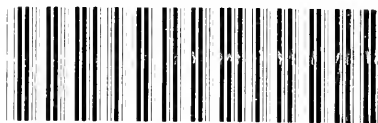
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